

Guard Apprenticeship Program Initiative (GAPI)

What is it? To help Soldiers improve their job skills and establish a lifetime career, the Army National Guard has established the Guard Apprenticeship Program Initiative (GAPI) – a partnering with the Department of Labor (DOL) in coordination with Veterans Administration (VA) offices. GAPI is an “earn while you learn” experience whereby Soldiers learn new concepts and skills and also obtain national certification in one of over 100 trades while earning wages. These trades are mapped to over 200 military occupational specialties (MOSs) and eligible Soldiers receive VA educational benefits while they pursue an apprenticeship program. The apprenticeship combines an educational curriculum with on-the-job training supervised by a trade professional or supervisor. Apprenticeship training takes one to five years to complete or 2000 documented work hours to become fully qualified in an occupation or trade.

What has the Army Guard done? The GAPI program has been facilitating the accreditation of military training with the requirements set by the DOL and the VA.

The GAPI program has helped to address Soldier employment needs as Soldiers learn a new trade or earn certification in a field where the Soldier frequently has a combination of military or civilian on-the-job or “at home” experience but lacks the certification. In other cases, the Soldier selects a trade of interest and starts the program with a “Trade” 101 fundamental curriculum and completes the program as a certified professional.

What continued efforts does the Army Guard have planned for the future? The GAPI program has established a network of Contractors who provide administrative support primarily in relation to the efforts associated with the DOL and the National Guard Bureau Employment Outreach Branch. Contractors will increasingly provide more support to develop and sustain GAPI within the respective Commands from the 54 States and Territories. This support leverages and builds synergies with civilian employers and labor unions while developing specific apprenticeship opportunities for Soldiers especially with agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security.

Why is this important to the Army and the Army Guard? This collaboration is essential to the sustainability of the ARNG and the vitality of the best-trained and dependable professionals our nation has to offer – our volunteer Soldiers. The GAPI program provides Soldiers from the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve an opportunity to gain civilian employment and certification, while continuing to serve in the all-volunteer force or while transitioning back to the civilian workforce.